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The Queen of the East; OR THE MARCH OF PROGRESS.



Being a History, in Outline, of the Growth and Development of the City of Meridian, Mississippi, from the Earliest Period of Its Existence to the Present Time, in the form of

A PLAY,

To be Presented at the Opera House in Meridian by a Company of Ladies and Gentlemen of the City, in the interest of a Fund to be started for the Purpose of erecting a Monument over the Graves of the Confederate Dead, in Rose Hill Cemetery, in said city.

Written Especially for the Occasion

BY

ONE OF THE OLDEST INHABITANTS.



We live for the Present and Future--loving the Past.

MAY, 1889.



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Cast of Characters.

SOWASHEE STATION,		Miss Edna Price
MERIDIAN,		Miss Mary White
WATCHMAN,		Miss Pauline Townsend
M. & O. R. R. CONDUCTOR,		A Voice in the Distance
METHODIST CIRCUIT RIDER,		Mr. Jas. E. Lockard
PRESBYTERIAN MINISTER,		Mr. Means Blewett
EPISCOPAL MINISTER,		Mr. Oscar Andrews
RAGSDALE HOUSE CLERK,		Mr. Jeff Preston
RAGSDALE HOUSE PORTER,		Mr. Gus Kendall
CONFEDERATE SOLDIERS,		Mr. Dick Bourdeaux
CARPET-BAGGER,		Mr. Watt Jones
NEGRO,		Mr. Jno. S. Goldsmith
KU KLUX,	{ JIM, BILL, MIKE,	Mr. W. S. Harris, Jr. and others
MERCHANTS,	{ COLONEL, MAJOR, CAPTAIN,	Mr. J. C. Inge Mr. S. M. Catchings Mr. A. H. Ball Mr. Levi Hurlbutt Mr. R. A. Fewell Mr. S. M. Catchings Mr. Jno. S. Goldsmith Mr. A. H. Ball Mr. Gus Kendall Mr. E. H. Dial Mr. A. H. Ball Mr. Jno. S. Goldsmith Mr. R. A. Fewell Mr. Levi Hurlbutt and others
FARMER, ELI,		Mr. Henry Brooke Miss Ella Thornton
WELFARE COMMITTEE,	{ GEN. HUSTLER, COL. PENININK, FIRST PRIVATE MEMBER, SECOND PRIVATE MEMBER,	
CAPITALIST, THE SPIRIT OF PROGRESS,		

THE INDUSTRIES.

HARDWARE,		Mrs. Eulalia A. Ramsay
JEWELRY AND SILVERWARE,		Miss Tillie Hafter
THE QUEEN AND CRESCENT RAILROAD,		Miss Evie Cox
THE POST OFFICE,		Miss Susie Montgomery
THE COTTON COMPRESS,		Miss Ellie Murphy
THE ICE FACTORY,		Miss Daisy Williams
THE FIRE DEPARTMENT,		Miss Letitia Lockard
THE NATIONAL BANKS,		Miss Lee Dabney
THE QUEEN OF FLOWERS,		Mrs. J. D. Preston
THE GODDESS OF GRAIN, ETC.,		Miss Sudie Harris
CROCKERY,		Miss Mollie Murphy
THE CANDY FACTORY,		Miss Mary Leigh Watkins
THE CIGAR FACTORY,		Miss Nora Hood
THE FURNITURE FACTORY,		Miss Hettie Jones
INSURANCE BUSINESS,		Miss Clara Mooser
DRUG STORES,		Mrs. A. S. Barnes
DRY GOODS,		Mrs. Kutcher Threefoot
MILLINERY,		Miss Birdie McInnis
PHOTOGRAPHIC STUDIO,		Miss Ellie Williams
MUSIC,		Miss Nannie Lockard
MERIDIAN DAILY NEWS,		Miss Maggie Brown
MERIDIAN DAILY DEMOCRAT,		Miss Eddie Taft
SASH AND BLIND FACTORY,		Miss Florence Jenkins
MACHINE SHOPS AND FOUNDRIES,		Miss Pattie Oakley
PUBLIC SCHOOLS,		
FERTILIZER FACTORY,		
CARRIAGE FACTORY,		
FAIRIES,		Helen Kimbrough Ione Kimbrough Aimee Reed Emelle Dial Marie Jefferson Hattie Ramsay

THE QUEEN OF THE EAST; OR The March of Progress.

ACT I. ANTE BELLUM ERA.

[Scene : Piney Woods Station, known as "Sowashee Station," on the Mobile & Ohio Railroad, surrounded by an old Cotton Field and Pine Woods. To be represented by a little girl, plainly and simply dressed.]

SOWASHEE—I'm only a little Railroad station,
Sowashee is my name,
I'm known alone to Ragsdale and Ball
And all unknown to fame.

I belong, 'tis said, to these two men—
These visionary beings ;
Aladdin's wonders fall far short
Of all their wondrous seeings.

I'm poor, but proud, and blush to own
I have no pedigree ;
I was only discovered by Jno. T. Ball
In eighteen, fifty-three.

One of my owners has it planned
To name me "Ragsdale City,"
And while I'm sure on this he's left,
Yet he's certainly very gritty.

"Meridian," I think, will be my name—
The centre of all creation.
Ambitious ! Crazy ! did you say ?
Poor little Sowashee Station !

Yes, I'm only a little station
On the M. & O.,
But Ragsdale and Ball, they swear by me,
And say they'll make me grow.

[Enter Mobile & Ohio train in charge of Conductor, who sounds whistle to stop train, puts on brakes, brings train to a stand-still and announces: "Sowashee Station."]

CONDUCTOR—[Addressing Sowashee]—Good morning, my little friend ! Out here in the piney woods all by yourself yet ?

SOWASHEE—Yes, I'm still alone.

CONDUCTOR—Lonesome ?

SOWASHEE—No, I pass away the time thinking of the future.

CONDUCTOR—Discouraged ?

SOWASHEE—No, I'm full of hope—I hope to grow.

CONDUCTOR—Any other Railroad got here yet ?

SOWASHEE—No ; none but yours, the M. & O.

CONDUCTOR—How are you to grow without Railroads ?

SOWASHEE—They'll come by and by.

CONDUCTOR—Yes, in the sweet by and by. Where's my friend, Mr. John T. Ball, one of your chief proprietors ?

SOWASHEE—He's up yonder on the hill laying off lots.

CONDUCTOR—And my visionary friend, L. A. Ragsdale—where's he ?

SOWASHEE—He's off somewhere trying to hold his lands—waiting for a rise.

CONDUCTOR—Waiting for a rise ! There won't be any rise anywhere about here in these diggins until Judgment Day. Well, my little friend, I must hurry on—can't stop

long at "flag stations," you know. Must hurry along to Marion station, where we make a good long stop. Good-bye till I see you again. Take care of yourself and stay here till I get back on my return trip. There's lots of land around here. Tell Ragsdale to be sure and hold it and not let it get away. Ta-ta ! All aboard ! [Sounds whistle to leave. Exit Conductor with Train.]

SOWASHEE (*Soliloquizing*)—Well, he has cold comfort, to be sure. Yes, I'll be here when he gets back. The day will come yet when he won't snub me in this style. I'm small now, 'tis true; but I see myself a bustling, glittering city, ruling all this region round about. Marion Station, indeed ! Marion's nowhere. I'll get ahead of Marion yet. I don't like for him to make fun of me just because I'm little. No, I don't either, and I won't like him any more, so I won't, and—[breaks down in sobs.]

[Enter Methodist Circuit-Rider.]

CIRCUIT RIDER—Hello, what place are you ?

SOWASHEE—I am Sowashee station—a new town just started.

CIRCUIT RIDER—Eh-heh ! I heard about you and thought I'd come and see. You see I'm a Methodist Circuit Rider and thought I'd better start a church here. You don't seem to be much of a town so far. However, I'll tell the Methodist Conference that I've found you, and we'll plant ourselves down here and wait for somebody to come. Say, sissy, how many inhabitants have you ?

SOWASHEE—Only two—Ragsdale and Ball.

CIRCUIT RIDER—Eh-heh ! Still, nevertheless, you are a community. You'll grow and need preaching to. From now on there'll be regular preaching here, you understand, at appointed times. You can count on a Methodist Church, if nothing else. Farewell, for this time ! I must go now, but will return. [Exit Circuit Rider.]

SOWASHEE—This now is encouraging ! I do believe I will grow. One station house, one church, two inhabitants, and lots and streets all laid off ! This is getting along nicely.

[Sowashee turns and addresses the Watchman in the distance.]

SOWASHEE—Watchman, tell us of the night,
What its signs of promise are !

WATCHMAN—The owls still hoot from dark till light,
And roost o'er the city's marshy site ;
The bull-frogs, all with the catarrh,
On Front street croak—croak, regular !

SOWASHEE—But, Watchman, can't you drive them away,
And tell them go to the swamps and stay ;
That Progress is hovering o'er these bogs,
That her touch is death to croaking frogs ?

WATCHMAN—No, no, my child !

The owls, they laugh your dreams to scorn,
And claim the rights they had when born ;
And the frogs, while they these marshes hug,
With a smile jump in, head-first—kerchug !

The Queen of the East; Or the March of Progress.

[Re-Enter M. & O. Train in charge of Conductor on return trip. Conductor sounds whistle to stop, puts on brakes, and announces: "Sowashee Station !"]

CONDUCTOR—You are here yet, are you, my little sanguine pine knot? Any new inhabitants since I saw you last?

SOWASHEE—No, not exactly, but I've had one caller—a Methodist minister—who proposes and intends establishing a Church here. That will be a good start.

CONDUCTOR—Yes, the start will be *good* enough, as far as it goes. But don't you reckon it will end with the start? You needn't felicitate yourself on working up a boom out of this movement; for a Methodist Church at a place is no sign it's a big place. The Methodists, they are everywhere, and they would be here and seize you and hold you, even if you never do amount to anything. Yes, you're right—that's a mighty *good start*. Keep a'hoping, my little girl. I don't want to throw any cold water on your visions. Yes, you're moving right along. I can hear you growing. "The baby's hair is still a'curling." One station house and two inhabitants, fixed—realities already; one church and a preacher on paper! The town is on a regular boom! "Let her roll, Gallagher!" All aboard! [Sounds whistle and train moves off.]

[*Re-Enter Methodist Circuit-Rider.*]

CIRCUIT RIDER—Well I'm here again and establish a church as I promised. In obedience to the orders of Conference I hereby plant Methodism in Sowashee Station.—[He takes his seat.]

SOWASHEE—Welcome, Welcome! I'm glad you've come. But I hear another foot-fall.

[*Turns to see, when a Presbyterian Minister Enters.*]

PRESBYTERIAN MINISTER—Are you Sowashee Station?

SOWASHEE—I am.

PRESBYTERIAN MINISTER—Well, I was on the search for you. I heard you were here. I'm a Presbyterian Minister and my object is to establish a Presbyterian Church at this place.

SOWASHEE—Welcome, welcome! The Methodists have already established themselves, and everything looks bright and hopeful.

PRESBYTERIAN MINISTER—You don't say so! They have captured the town already, have they? How many inhabitants have you?

SOWASHEE—Two.

PRESBYTERIAN MINISTER—Who are they?

SOWASHEE—Ragsdale and Ball.

PRESBYTERIAN MINISTER—Well, the Methodists may have the town; I will take the inhabitants. I hereby plant the Presbyterian Church in the city of Sowashee and assert my claim to the owners thereof. [Seats himself.]

SOWASHEE—That's all right, I reckon; but its just like a Presbyterian. He wants the owners of the town just because he imagines they are better than anybody else—the toniest people in town. Well, if they are the *only* people in town I suppose they must be the toniest, so he is safe on that proposition. That Methodist brother will, however, hold him a light when it comes to gathering them in from all kinds of material as the town grows and expands. They are both good workers though, and I am glad they are here. But look, here comes another!

[*Episcopal Minister Enters.*]

EPISCOPAL MINISTER—Are you Sowashee Station?

SOWASHEE—I am.

EPISCOPAL MINISTER—I heard that there was such a place on the line of the M. & O. Railroad. I have come to establish a church of the Episcopal faith in your midst. What prospects for future developments of the town? Any more railroads coming in here? Do you think you will grow?

SOWASHEE—Oh, yes. We already have a Methodist and a Presbyterian Church, a few inhabitants, and besides a railroad in operation we have a railroad in contemplation from Vicksburg to this point to be completed in the near future. I'll be glad to have you here. There'll be plenty of material for you to work on, for I am beginning to be impressed with the idea that this is going to be a flourishing and a high-toned town in every respect. Have a seat, sir, here with these other Ministers.

EPISCOPAL MINISTER—Very well. From this day forth there is established here the Episcopal Church—and let everybody take notice.

[*Enter M. & O. Railroad Conductor, with Train.*]

CONDUCTOR—Hello! Things begin to look animated around here. You're growing! Somebody's come!

SOWASHEE—Yes, three churches already established—and we might say, four!

CONDUCTOR—And those men are all preachers, are they—all got their plants in? Their mills are all ready, waiting for the grist. By the way, what churches do those fellows run?

SOWASHEE—That serious, faithful looking man, he is a Methodist Minister—a Methodist Circuit Rider; I am on his circuit.

CONDUCTOR—Yes, he looks like one. I'll bet you he honestly believes that religion is a better thing for a town to have than a railroad; and what's more, he'll whoop it up on that line, too. They put religion above everything else, and are actually in dead earnest about it. Strange people, these Methodists are! Well, go ahead, who are the others?

SOWASHEE—That jolly, comfortable looking fellow—the one doing all the talking—he's telling some joke or anecdote to the others—he's a Presbyterian; and that correct looking gentleman with the clergyman's vest, is an Episcopalian.

CONDUCTOR—Well, where is the Baptist? I'd a thought you would have captured a Baptist before now to add to your collection.

SOWASHEE—I told you I might claim four churches as well as three, for the Baptist is the same as here now. There has been a Baptist minister about here looking around. He has gone down to Sowashee creek not far off, for the purpose, so he said, of investigating our water supply before coming to town and locating. It takes water, you know, to run a Baptist Church.

CONDUCTOR—Yes, and a heap of it!

SOWASHEE—Now, don't you regard all this as good indications for the future, and quite an improvement to the town?

CONDUCTOR—Yes, it improves the town considerably as a chicken market. Three preachers and another one a'coming! Where are you going to get the chickens to feed them on? Yes, I reckon this is a pretty good start—and a proper start. No use in starting off a town without churches. After getting them and some schools, then you'll be ready to grow. Look out, though, my little one, that you don't have more religion in your beginning than you do in your ending. But in the meantime you'd better throw an anchor to windward for another railroad. Farewell! I must pull out now. All aboard for Marion

Station! But hold! Here comes another train! Look! Look!

SOWASHEE—Yes! First train from Vicksburg! Hurrah for the Southern Railroad*! Welcome! Welcome!

PRESBYTERIAN MINISTER—Another railroad completed! Marvelous! Wonderful!

EPISCOPAL MINISTER—God be praised for the final accomplishment of this great undertaking! May His blessings be poured out abundantly on this town!

M. & O. CONDUCTOR—For we are “getting there, Eli, with both feet, and don’t you forget it!”

[Train comes puffing in from Vicksburg, and Conductor of same cries out—“Sowashee Station—Change cars for Mobile and Succanochee !”]

[Curtain Goes Down.]

ACT II. WAR ERA.

[SCENE 1ST: The Town or Station—the name having been changed to Meridian—is here represented by a larger girl than “Sowashee” in preceding Act.]

MERIDIAN—Well, at last they’ve named me “Meridian.” The coming of the new Railroad—the Southern Railroad—had much to do towards deciding it. I’m no longer Sowashee Station! One of my proprietors insisted for a while on calling me “Ragsdale City,” but it wouldn’t take. Henceforth, I’m “Meridian—the Future Great!” I expect now to grow right along. Everything is favorable. I already have one of the chief requisites to a growing town or city—an institution which no ambitious town can do without—a real hotel—the Ragsdale Hotel—where can be had the best the market affords, and good lodging. One or two stores have, also, been opened—small, ‘tis true; but “tall oaks from little acorns grow.” We’ve got a splendid and extensive stock of choice new lands, nicely laid off into lots and squares and sizes to suit the most fastidious. The frogs and the owls, like the Indians, are being crowded out. I’m rapidly rising above the dignity of a “frog pond.” If nothing interferes, I will blossom yet into a city. Oh, I wonder what the future has in store for me! My watchman upon the tower, who is ever scanning the distant horizon on every side and taking in everything between, who reads in the heavens the signs of the times, who noted the aspect of the planets at the very hour of my birth—my prognosticator, prophet, oracle—I hope he is reading the heavens favorably for me to-night, and that his searching eye discerns no evil coming! His eye sees everything that’s brewing.

MERIDIAN—Watchman! Tell us of the night,
What its signs of promise are.

WATCHMAN—Our country, once so glad and bright,
Is trembling ‘neath the tread of war.

MERIDIAN—War—war, it will soon be done,
As soon as the boys have had their fun.

WATCHMAN—No! Serious and sick’ning grows the gloom;
The red blood runs—the cannon boom.

MERIDIAN—Oh, Watchman, can’t you stop it’s flow,
And give poor me a chance to grow?

WATCHMAN—No, no, my child! but bow your head,
For I catch the sound of the soldiers’ tread;
Ragged and hungry—they come, they come!
Hear the sound of the beating drum!

[Drum beats and Curtain Falls.]

TABLEAU: *The Soldier Boy’s Good-Bye.*

“Farewell, mother, I may never
See thy loving face again.
But, oh, you’ll not forget me mother,
If I’m numbered with the slain,

ACT II, SCENE 2nd.

[Office in Ragsdale Hotel at night. Negro Porter sitting asleep Enter Confederate Soldier, who sees no one on first entering.]

SOLDIER—Hello boss! Who’s around here? Where’s the clerk, if you’ve got any? Hello there, nigger—wake up—wake up! [Negro wakes up and stretches and gapes.] Where’s the boss of this shanty—where’s the clerk?

PORTER—[Half awake.] He’s sleep.

SOLDIER—What town is this, any how?

PORTER—This is Mareegion.

SOLDIER—What place is this—this house—is it a hotel?

PORTER—Yas, sir—Hit’s the Ragsdale Hotel.

SOLDIER—Well, I want to stay al’ night—stir your stumps—wake up the clerk or the proprietor, or somebody—hustle now—get a move on you—I’m sleepy.

[Porter retires slowly after lighting candle, and is heard behind the scene waking up clerk. Clerk comes in half asleep.]

SOLDIER—[To clerk.] I want to put up here to-night. Can I get a room?

CLERK—I reckon so.

SOLDIER—All right—I’m mighty tired.

CLERK—Register your name, please, and pay me your bill.

SOLDIER—How much for a night’s lodging?

CLERK—Twenty-five dollars.

SOLDIER—All right, “let her roll Gallagher.”

CLERK—[Ringing for Porter] Show the gentleman up to “Number 40.”

[Exeunt Porter and Soldier.]

[Enter another Soldier, No 2. Clerk dropped into a doze.]

SOLDIER—Wake up, my friend! Is this the Ragsdale Hotel?

CLERK—Yes, sir.

SOLDIER—Well, give me a room—where’s your Register? [He Registers.]

CLERK—Twenty-five dollars. [Soldier pays him.]

SOLDIER—I’m ready. Where’s your porter?

CLERK—[Rings for Porter. Enter Porter] Show the gentleman up to “Number 40.”

[Exeunt Porter and Soldier. Clerk begins making preparations as if intending to retire again when enter two Soldiers.]

SOLDIER, No. 3—[Registers his Name.] We want a room. We’re worn out. [His companion, Soldier No. 4, registers.]

CLERK—All right. Do you both want to occupy the same room?

SOLDIER, No. 3—Yes, any way, just so we get a rest.

CLERK—Twenty-five dollars a piece. [The two soldiers pay. Clerk rings for porter several times, who finally gets back from his last trip.] Here, Bill, show these gentlemen up to “Number 40.” [Porter with candle in hand strolls out lazily with soldiers following] Plague take these soldiers! I wish they would sleep out of doors—they’re used to it. They bother me coming here this time of night. If this business keeps up this way all night this hotel will be full before morning. It’s been going on ever since supper. I’m going to try to snatch another snooze before any more of them stumble in here.

[Curtain Falls.]

*The Railroad now known as the Vicksburg and Meridian Railroad, for a long time (until after the war) bore the name of the “Southern Railroad.”

The Queen of the East; Or the March of Progress.

ACT II, SCENE 3D.

[Room No. 40, Ragsdale Hotel. Soldiers all sleeping on the floor—Finally one scratches himself—then another—and another, and so on, till all get to scratching, groaning and rolling. Enter Porter with another soldier.]

PORTER—Go right in dare, sir, and go to bed.

SOLDIER—[*Hesitating.*] But the clerk didn't send me to this room.

PORTER—Yas sur, he did. He told me to fetch you to "Number 40."

SOLDIER—But this room is perfectly alive with soldiers.

ONE OF THE OCCUPANTS—If there wasn't nothing alive in here but soldiers, you could get through the night without a scratch. Come in and make yourself at home---needn't be backward---everything is on a level in here.

SOLDIER—Well, I reckon I'll have to tackle it --so here goes! [*Lies down with the other soldiers.*]

[Curtain Falls.]

TABLEAU :—The Soldier Boy on Duty.

"Just before the battle, mother,
I am thinking most of you,
While upon the field I'm watching,
With the enemy in view."

SONG : Mother, is the Battle Over?

Mother, is the battle over?
Thousands have been slain, they say.
Is my brother coming? Tell me—
Has our army gained the day?
Is he well or is he wounded?
Mother, do you think he's slain?
If you know I pray you tell me—
Will my brother come again?

CHORUS:

Mother is the battle over?
Thousands have been slain, they say.
Is my brother coming? tell me,
Has our army gained the day?

Mother dear, you're always sighing,
Since you last the paper read;
Tell me why you now are crying,
Is my dearest brother dead?
Ah! I see you cannot tell me,
Brother's one among the slain!
Tho' he loved us very dearly,
Will he ever come again?

Fighting for our glorious Southland,
Like a hero he was slain,
Still the day may not be distant
When in Heav'n we'll meet again.

TABLEAU.—The Grave of an "Unknown."

"Only a Private! no ribbon or star
Shall gild with false glory his name!
No honor for him in braid or in bar,
His legion of honor is only a scar,
And his wounds are his roll of fame!"

Only a martyr who fought and who fell,
Unknown and unmarked in the strife!
But still as he lies in his lonely cell,
Angel and seraph the legend shall tell—
Such a death is eternal life!"

ACT III.—RECONSTRUCTION ERA.

[SCENE I: Return of Peace—The sounds of Hammer and Saw and Brick-Mason's Trowel are heard.]

MERIDIAN—“O Peace! thou source and soul of human life.”
“O first of human blessings and supreme!
Fair Peace! how lovely, how delightful thou!
By whose wide tie the kindred sons of men,
Like brothers live—
—while honest toil
Gives every joy, and to those joys a right
Which idle, barbarous rapine but usurps—
Pure is thy reign.”

Thank heaven, I bear enmity to no man; those who were my foes are my brothers now.

“No more shall the war-cry sever,
Or the winding rivers be red:
All anger is banished forever
When we laurel the graves of their dead!
Under the sod and the dew,
Waiting the judgment day:—
Love and tears for the Blue,
Tears and love for the Gray!”

Yes, how glad I am for peace! There's music in the sound of the hammer and the saw, and hope in the ring of the brick mason's trowel. [Turns and Addresses Watchman.]

MERIDIAN—Watchman! Tell us of the night,
What its signs of promise are.

WATCHMAN—Night—night—night—night,
Long night of gloom without a star!

MERIDIAN—Why is it, Watchman, why—tell me pray—
Why is my hope so long deferred?

WATCHMAN—Because, my child, the vile hold sway,
And honesty is sepulchred.
These days are the days of the Carpet-bag—
The harvest time of the Scalawag.
Let Reconstruction run its course;
Submit you must to the rule of force.
The Carpet-Bagger now holds sway—
Every dog must have his day!

Enter Carpet-Bagger.

CARPET-BAGGER—Ah! This is the goodly city of Meridian that you read about? [Sees Meridian sitting by and bows complacnetly as if desiring to make acquaintance. Meridian turns her back contemptuously on him.] Ah! you stuck up little affair, you! You snub me, do you! You little would-if-you-could, one-horse town, you refuse to make my acquaintance! These little struggling, thread-bare, pauperized, down-in-the-ditch Southern communities are as proud and haughty as if they had the whole earth in a swing. Depriving them of their property is like clipping the wings of an unruly old chicken—they can't fly quite as high as they used to, but they still step high and keep looking up for a crack in the fence to get through. All right! Let her turn her back on me; let her give me the back of her hand if it gives her pleasure. I didn't come all the way from Massachusetts down here to this little village in search of social standing. I've quit hunting for social standing. It's time thrown away. There's plenty of that in Massachusetts for any fellow who desires to frit away his time trying to conform himself and his conduct to the whims of that class of people who assume to run the social standing question. Poor little Meridian! It breaks my heart to even suspect that I am not welcome! Ha—ha—ha—ha.—[Retires to one side.]

[Enter Negro]

NEGRO—Well, gentlemen, life's purty tough. A nigger has to work hard fur what he gits. Here I is been working hard all de week and ain't got but only \$3.00. [Pulls it out and looks at it, and finally puts it in his pocket.] and got to git some pervisions wid hit. It's bad to have to spend every solitary cent a man's got fur grub. But

you's bleeged to have grub. The ole 'oman and the childern needs cloze more'n what they's got. But bimeby, I'll sorter ketch up and git straight, I reckon.

[Turns to go, is intercepted by Carpet-Bagger.]

CARPET-BAGGER—Hello, my friend! Do you live about here? You seem to be well-to-do and at home.

NEGRO—Yas sir, I lives here.

CARPET-BAGGER—Eh-heh! Glad to see you. I want to get acquainted with all such men as you.

NEGRO—Yas, sir! I knows you already. You's de new man dat come to dis town so's you can be our nex Circus Judge, ain't you. I seed you las night up to Lockhart and heard 'em 'scussin' you. Is you just now got in?

CARPET-BAGGER—Yes--only to-day; and I want to talk to you quietly and privately about this and various things.

[Puts his arm around negro, and while talking in low tone, with other hand in negro's pocket. Meridian repeats following lines, Carpet-Bagger transferring money to his own pocket as Meridian repeats last two lines.]

MERIDIAN—Old Greeley says the scalawags
And Carpet-baggers say,
With an earnest and a solemn look,
To the darkey "let us prey ;"
Their spelling of this little word
Poor darkey cannot see—
Instead of spelling with an *A*
They spell it with an *E*;
And all they have to say or do,
Is to tell them they are Rads,
And while one hand's around the nig,
The other's after scads.

[Enter M. & O. R. R. Train.]

M & O. BRAKEMAN—Meridian! Change cars for Selma, Vicksburg, and Chattanooga!

[Enter V & M R. R. Train.]

V. & M. BRAKEMAN—Meridian! Change cars for Mobile, Corinth, Selma, and Chattanooga!

[Enter Selma and Meridian Train.]

S. & M. BRAKEMAN—Meridian! Change cars for Vicksburg, Mobile, Corinth, and Chattanooga!

[Enter Alabama and Chattanooga Train.]

A. & C. BRAKEMAN—Meridian! Change cars for Mobile, Corinth, Vicksburg, and Selma!

[Hotel Porters call out their Hotels.]

[Curtain Falls.]

TABLEAU: "Reconstruction."

ACT III. SCENE 2ND.

[Deep Dark Forest—Time, Midnight—Enter Three Ku-Klux—Jim, Bill and Mike—leading Carpet-bagger with Rope around his neck.]

JIM—[To Carpet-Bagger] Say, don't be so skeered, my friend; be spunky and gritty, and brave, like you were in the war--like you were when you followed up the army, and boldly sold your stuff to the Yankee soldiers. Now is nothing to then. I declare! If he ain't so skeered he can't talk. His knee-jints are clanking together. Don't be so consounded skeered, you fool you --we ain't going to do nothing to you but hang you. Say, Bill, don't you think he has been in this world long enough and might afford to "cross over the river" now?

BILL—I don't know. How old is he? Lemme see his teeth! [Goes up and looks Carpet-Bagger in the mouth.] Yes, Jim, I think he has served his purpose here on earth and it would be unfair to detain him.

MIKE—That's me too. I'm one of these sort of fellows who don't believe in working a willing horse to death.

Even if this apostle is willing to abide longer with us on this terrestrial ball; yet if he longs to be freed from earthly cares, I think we ought to "touch him off."

CARPET-BAGGER—[Stammering.] Please, gentlemen, let me go!

MIKE—Didn't we just say we are going to let you go?

CARPET-BAGGER—But turn me loose---release me, I pray you!

JIM—What do you want to be released for?

CARPET-BAGGER—So I can go back to my home in Massachusetts; I'll leave and never return.

JIM—Well, what did you come down here for? Didn't you expect to die among us when you came? You didn't intend to be so temporary in your sojournment, did you?

BILL—And havn't you always heard that this is a mighty unhealthy country? Didn't you know that the people down here die as well as anywhere else?

JIM—Oh, the dying part's all right. That ain't what he's kicking against. He only hates for his relations to know that he died with a rope on his neck.

MIKE—Oh, if that's all, that can be set all right. We can write to his people that he died with the malaria; that the chills and fever undermined his constitution. How's that for a "comp," old pard? [Addressing Carpet-Bagger.] He doesn't say. I take it though that silence gives consent.

JIM—How shall we hang him---old style or new style?

BILL—He's a nice, genteel looking fellow—let's give him the latest modern improvement. He's got nerve—he can stand it.

MIKE—Yes, any white man that would steal from a nigger has got nerve enough to stand anything.

BILL—Now, boys, I'm always in favor of doing the fair thing—give every man a square deal. Let's not take advantage of him just because we've got him in our power. Let's give him a chance to say his prayers, if he wants to. If there's any one thing I believe in it's religious liberty. Let him pull the stopper out of his prayer bottle if he wants to, and just let it run. I'm the man that can stay here and stand it till he gets through.

JIM—All right, so far as I'm concerned. What say you Mike?

MIKE—Same here! But ain't that the regular order any how?

JIM—It is for niggers. But you have to take a special vote when it comes to decorating the forests with one of these here mangy, one-shirted carpet-baggers.

MIKE—You're right! Well, lets get at it. Here my friend, stir yourself! Kneel in prayer if you want to. Light in and pray for anything you want to. This is a free country. [Looking Carpet-Bagger in the face.] Boys, I'll be durned my cats if he aint dead! [Turns him loose. Corpse falls over.]

BILL—Is he dead, sure 'nuff?

JIM—Yes—He's dead.

BILL—Well, poor fellow! We never done it, did we, boys?

MIKE—No—We ain't guilty.

JIM—No, sir---he just died by himself!

MIKE—There ain't no body can say he was hung---can they?

BILL—No—If they do, they will sure lie.

JIM—What excuse will we give for his being dead---if it's ever found out?

The Queen of the East; Or the March of Progress.

MIKE---Oh, we can just say he froze to death.

BILL---But its too hot down here in this swamp for a man to freeze to death. Let's get up something reasonable.

MIKE---Well, here's what happened to him---the buffalo gnats got the upper hand of him---overpowered him as it were.

BILL---That settles it---that sounds like it---that's got something plausible about it. [Puts his foot on corpse and presses it.] Boys, he's undoubtedly a dead carcass!

[Curtain Falls.]

TABLEAU: *Revolution--1875.*

ACT IV. ERA OF DEPRESSION---DOUBT---YELLOW FEVER.

SCENE 1ST.

[SCENE: Merchant Sitting on Dry Goods Box in front of Store whittling white pine. Enter Major.]

MAJOR---Hello, Colonel! How's business?

COLONEL---Dull---dull! How's it around your way?

MAJOR---Dull---nothing doing.

COLONEL---Have a seat and rest yourself. Where are you going?

MAJOR---Am going up to the Bank to make a deposit. Get your book and come on.

COLONEL---Got nothing to deposit. Done nothing today. [Major takes a seat on box by side of Colonel, and takes a piece of white-pine from him and goes to whittling also.] How much have you got?

MAJOR---Mighty little, I tell you; and some of that yesterday's business. Colonel let's go hunting to-morrow? What say you?

COLONEL---Hunting is bad here lately. I went the other day and found nothing but mosquitos. Where do you want to go?

MAJOR---Anywhere. I don't care.

COLONEL---All right. We'll go if everything is favorable. But talking about business. I was just sitting here turning things over in my mind. Have been studying on it for some time. I've about made up my mind to leave this town. I believe Meridian has seen her best days. What do you think of her prospects, Major?

MAJOR---I think myself she has about "struck bottom" and is there to stay. She's "a dead duck," I'm afraid.

COLONEL---Yes, sir, she's a "gone coon skin" sure as you're born. I used to think Meridian was going to be a town—in fact, a city; but I've lost faith. The money panic of '73 knocked the wind out of her sails and she has never recovered, and I'm afraid never will.

MAJOR---Yes, that and Radicalism together about "cooked her goose." True, since the Democrats turned things over generally in '75, she has looked up a little. Everything has looked up so far as this is concerned. But every body just goes right on by Meridian and pays no attention to her. Drummers won't stop here. They don't want to sell Meridian any goods. Her credit is bad, and while I believe she is improving some, the progress is too slow and gradual.

[Enter Captain from Neighboring Store.]

CAPTAIN---Hello, you two seem to have plenty of leisure—let's have a game of marbles. I'll bet I can beat any man in sight.

MAJOR---Oh, pshaw! I'm tired playing marbles. I've just come from playing a game around on Johnson street. You and the Colonel take a game. I'm on my way to the Bank [Captain takes up a piece of white-pine and goes to whittling.]

CAPTAIN---Well I can beat you a game of drafts then, chess, pitching dollars—anything! What are you fellows talking so seriously about? Planning something?

MAJOR---No, no. We were just discussing Meridian's prospects. Many people are sanguine of her future and imagine we are really entering on a prosperous season now; but the Colonel and I agree that there is nothing substantial about her sometimes apparent prospects. To tell the very truth about matters, business is *sure enough* dull now.

CAPTAIN---I think you are mistaken. I believe the town is on an up grade. I think she is fast "pulling out of the kinks." Our cotton sales are increasing every year. I think the town has caught a new hold since the establishment of the Compress a year or two ago. It gave us a new life and a new existence as a cotton market which we have well maintained. All her changes are for the better. Whenever a man goes away from Meridian in search of a better place, he's sure to find his way back here sooner or later—isn't that so? He's just as sure to do it "as gun's iron."

[Enter Farmer with Cotton Sample.]

FARMER---[To Colonel] Buying cotton to-day?

COLONEL---What have you been offered? [Takes sample and examines it.]

FARMER---8 $\frac{1}{2}$. Can you raise it any?

COLONEL---How much do you want to trade to day? How many bales have you?

FARMER---Three bales. I need a few things—will trade a little of it.

COLONEL---George, old fellow, that's about as high as I can go, I reckon. That's all it's worth.

FARMER---What's the news from the yellow fever towns to-day? Any change for the better? No danger of it's getting here, is there?

CAPTAIN---No, it will never get here. That's one thing about Meridian—she's healthy. It is getting no better though in the towns it has struck.

MAJOR---Some of our people are afraid it will get here unless trains are stopped from running, but we've got good quarantines against Mobile, New Orleans, Vicksburg and Grenada and against everything. We are alright. If it should strike here I would just go ahead with my business same as usual. It couldn't hurt this town—away up here in the interior. Where would you go if it should come here?

COLONEL---Really, I don't know. I think, though, I would stay here—not leave at all.

CAPTAIN---I think that I would too. That, however, is to be decided after it gets here.

MAJOR---Yes, some of our sensible people are making fools of themselves about it. They are scared to death before it even thinks of getting here. The thing I'm after is to build up business and put some life in the old town instead of sitting up looking for the yellow fever every minute.

[Enter Meridian.]

MERIDIAN---Watchman, tell us of the night, What its signs of promise are!

WATCHMAN—The people soon will take to flight,
The town stampede—"a pulse is still—
There's a form to shroud and a grave to fill,
All shrouded soon the town will lie
And the dead drop down 'neath the burning sky,
For the Yellow Death is upon the air
And the City lies in the clutch of despair!"

COLONEL—Men do you hear those ominous words?
What are we to do? It is already upon us!

MAJOR—Gentlemen, I must get my family away from here—I must go!

CAPTAIN—Yes, as many people as possible—especially women and children—must be gotten out in spite of quarantines. As for myself I propose to stay and see it through.

COLONEL—Yes, so shall I—or fall in trying!

FARMER—Gentlemen, my home and all I have is open, free to all I can accommodate. I speak the same for all my neighbors! Send your people out. We'll do the best we can!

MAJOR—Well, I'll go right now! Come on!

CAPTAIN—As for me I shall never desert the good old town.

On thy needs, Meridian, I will stand and wait!

COLONEL—Here too's a heart and hand for any fate!

[Curtain Falls.]

ACT IV. SCENE 2ND.

[Among the Graves of her Heroes who fell under the breath of the Yellow Pestilence.]

MERIDIAN—Thou goddess Fame, who since the birth of Time
On foremost wave of human acts sublime
Hast rode, and with thy scroll and pen in hand
Hast traced the deeds of every race and land;
Who chooses scenes where heroes' hearts are tried,
And marks the spot where modest worth has died,
Who hovers o'er the blood-damp'd battle ground,
And leaves thy wreath upon the soldier's mound---
Come, leave those scenes which country's love inspires.
Those combats heated by ambition's fires;
Turn from the field where steel and bullets rage,
And write new courage on thy living page.

Know'st thou, fair Fame, this beauteous sunny land,
With flowers bedecked---by balmy breezes fanned?
Thou'st been here oft to crown the hero's brow,
None grander though than those who wait thee now.
This lovely land is once again in gloom,
Upon her breast there's many a new made tomb;
Our summer sun's been changed into a foe,
Our breezes fraught with poison and with woe.
Yea, monster Death hath stol'n the sun's hot beams,
And caught the moisture from the stagnant streams.
From filthy pools and marshes low and damp,
From fen and flat and from the boggy swamp,
And of them wove a yellow mantle long
Within whose feverish folds he's wrapt a throng
Of rich and poor and many a sufferer's slave,
And brushed them all alike into the grave.

Here 'mid these scenes the human heart's been tried,
And many a hero here, unnoticed, died;
Patiently through nights of fever and of pain
The silent night-watch's seen the life-spark wane,
And walked exhausted oft from door to door
To help the needy---he himself as poor.
He who can bend o'er some lone humble bed,
Where fever feeds and where it long has fed---
Death's yellow mantle dangling 'gainst his cheek
While *doing* valor which he would not speak---
Is 'mong the brave, whose modest lives and worth
Their God remembers, e'en if forgot on earth.

Boast not, thou page, which holds the warrior's name.
Nor thou which breathes the honor'd statesman's fame!
Thou marble shaft, which points towards the skies,
Speak not too loud! Beneath thy base there lies
Oft times less virtue than thy carvings tell---
The shaft of monied knaves might do as well;
There rests 'neath thee perhaps a heart less brave
Than that which sleeps in some neglected grave.
Here, o'er a fever hero's humble dust
Build thy tall shaft, O Fame---if one you must.

[Curtain Falls.]

ACT V. ERA OF PRESENT PROSPERITY.

[Enter Meridian.]

[Scene: In Board of Trade and Cotton Exchange Rooms. Meridian represented by a lady larger and older than the one representing the city through the three preceding acts.]

MERIDIAN—Ten years almost since the Yellow Death stripped me of some of my best; but my people are a race of men and women who look up and faint not. Business is brightening—everything seems to have a forward look. At present I have five railroads—"the Old Reliable," the M. & O., who knew me in my early days and sometimes twitted me as being only a little "flag station" lost in the piney woods; then next the V. & M.; then the Selma Railroad, now the East Tennessee, Virginia and Georgia, or a part of that system; then after the war what a flush time we had building the Alabama and Chattanooga, now the Alabama Great Southern. The construction of it scattered greenbacks about here for a while in the imaginations of many as thick as autumn leaves in Vallambrosa, and everybody felt rich; but finally what a collapse, my countrymen! Lately we have completed the New Orleans and Northeastern; and I think that I can rightfully claim to be at last a great railroad centre.

A spirit among my people to move on faster seems to be trying to develop. What we need is some rousing spirit to inspire and lead the way. The poet's doctrine, "They also serve who only stand and wait"—I wonder if that applies to towns as well as individuals. May be if I'll only stand and wait, a good fortune will overtake me in course of time. So say some; while a few others, like a hen with one chicken, keep scratching away with as much flurry and flutter as if they had set the town ablaze with excitement and say we must keep moving and move faster. I really believe we need somebody who—

[Enter Eli.]

ELI—My name is Eli! I am the Eli that you read about—the fellow that gets there with both feet—and don't you forget it. I have come to take charge of Meridian. I understand that she wants to grow, and is making desperate efforts to do so. I am the citizen whose influence she long has sought. I was born in the cave where the Dakota blizzards roost. In my infancy the whirlwinds have been my playmates on the prairies, and in my maturer years I have run down the great western cyclones, hurricanes and tornadoes until they were out of breath. I am the son of Goliath of Gas, the half-brother of Exaggeration, and am in love with the Spirit of Progress. I am the Power of the Press and the inventor of printer's ink—job work executed with neatness and despatch on reasonable terms—the newspaper, the great moulder of public opinion, weekly, \$2.00 a year in advance, and now is the time to subscribe. I am the morning and the evening daily with the very latest Press Dispatches and Market Reports. I'm The Meridian Daily News and the Meridian Democrat all rolled into one, and don't you forget it!

The Queen of the East; Or the March of Progress.

MERIDIAN---But, my dear sir, you enter very unceremoniously---you seem almost out of breath!

ELI---Uneremoniously! You mustn't stand on ceremony, my unsophisticated friend. Ceremony is out of date. You must go it with a rush---keep things a 'whooping. Yes, run yourself out of breath. Did you know that a boom is about to strike this country. In a short time every town and city will own a boom. In fact the boom is already a booming. Reach out and catch it. You are the town to move right along. I'll take charge of this business. From now on, we are the most desirable town in America---no other town is fit to live in. There mustn't be any kickers in the ranks, but everybody must "gallop with the gang." Any man who wants to go the other way---"his name is Dennis" already!

What shall we do? Why, form a syndicate--two of them ---three---fifty---a hundred. I tell you what, a syndicate is the thing. It's like Johnson grass. Plant just one stalk of it and it will send its roots down 316 feet into the ground and spread all over creation and take your premises, and whenever a man succeeds in getting rid of it, all his great grand-children's children will be dead. That's the way with a syndicate. All you want is one; then after a while there'll be more of 'em than you've got inhabitants.

I tell you, my friend, we are getting there in "great shape." My motto is "get there"—not with one foot lagging behind---but get there with both feet, heels clear over the line, and no falling backwards and catching on the hands. I'll go out and summons together some of your prominent citizens and form a General Welfare Committee out of them. That's another thing you need. I tell you, there's nothing on the face of this globe with as much jurisdiction as a Welfare Committee. They'll do the thing up brown! They'll set the ball in motion! They'll "paint the town red," and don't you forget it. [Exit Eli.]

MERIDIAN---He's a queer being, to be sure. I've heard of him before, it seems to me. Let me see. Eli---Eli. [said reflectively.] He's what you call a progressive citizen, I imagine. He evidently intends to raise a storm of some sort, and, as a calm is said always to precede a storm, I suppose that explains my present drowsy feelings. [Falls into a sleep.]

TABLEAU: Meridian's Dream of the Future.

[Enter Eli, accompanied by members of Welfare Committee, viz : Gen. Hustler, Col. Penninink, Capt. Wiseman, and others.]

MERIDIAN---O Eli, Eli! I have had such a sweet sleep since you left, and such a delightful dream in the midst of it. O, I think I saw my future in that dream. It was full of meaning. I could read it like a poem. In the bright and lovely vision I saw a beauteous array of—

ELI---Never mind what you dreamt. This is no time for dreaming. This is not an age of dreams. If you waste your time dreaming you'll never "get there" with one foot, even. The object of life is to get there with *both* feet! What you want is, Facts—not Dreams. "In this life we want nothing but Facts—nothing but Facts!" Life "is a mere question of figures, a case of simple arithmetic." We are going to organize a Welfare Committee now, and are going to run this town. Give us a rest on dreams and visions. [Exit Meridian.]

You, now, General, [Addressing Gen. Hustler] are to act as President of the Committee; you, Colonel, as Secretary; Capt. Wiseman, he can do the heavy standing around, and I'll act as Treasurer, while all the balance of you will be the Vice-Presidents, the private members and the Standing Committees. We are ready for business now. Whoop her up, boys!

FIRST PRIVATE MEMBER---But, here, if the court please, don't you think we ought to place these gentlemen regu-

larly and formally in nomination for these offices. To organize otherwise looks most too "cut and dried."

ELI---Any way, just so we put the machine a'grinding. [Eli engages a member in undertone conversation.]

SECOND PRIVATE MEMBER---Oh, that takes too much time. Life's too short.

FIRST PRIVATE MEMBER---[Aside to Second Private Member] But, plague take it, I've got a nominating speech in me that's a'hurting. It must come out!

ELI---All right, gentlemen, proceed with the nominations. [To third Private Member.] Go ahead!

THIRD PRIVATE MEMBER---I nominate General Hustler for President of this meeting.

SEVERAL VOICES---I second the nomination.

ELI---You've heard the nomination. All in favor of General Hustler as President signify it by saying "Aye;" all opposed, "No." General Hustler is elected. Next is Secretary. Hurry up, gentlemen!

FIRST PRIVATE MEMBER---If the Court please, and gentlemen of the jury, I arise to place in nomination for the office of Secretary a gentleman well known to you all---one who, during the late unhappy struggle between the States, heroically buckled on his armor and rushed to do battle for his—

ELI---Never mind what he done in the war! We are not running the war now---we are going to do this town up---that's what we are here for! And it makes no difference, either, which side he died on. We'll stop this whole nominating business! Colonel Penninink, you are the man picked out for Secretary. Let's get down to business!

[Enter Capitalist.]

See! Look! There goes something now that ought to be caught. Rope him in! Go for him!

GENERAL HUSTLER---Who is it---what is it?

ELI---Why, it's a capitalist. You need all of his sort you can get. Catch him! Look at him—he's hunting for a good investment right now. He wants to move somewhere.

COLONEL PENNININK---But, how do you know he's a capitalist?

ELI---Why, easy enough! he's a stranger in town---never was seen about here before---of course he's a capitalist!

GENERAL HUSTLER---How will we catch him, though? We don't know how to get at him. A capitalist is a timid, skerry sort of a bird, isn't he?

ELI---Why, just catch him! Put salt on his tail---meet him at the train with a brass band---ride him around town---write some resolutions about him---tender him a banquet---give him an ovation---do anything. Why, that fellow is in search right now for a place to build a factory of some kind—he's got capital. That's what you want. That's the only stuff that will set the wheels of Commerce and Industry in motion. I tell you, we must have him! I'll tackle him for you. [Calls to Capitalist from across the stage.]

Say---there---my friend! You! I say---ARE YOU COMING SOUTH? [Capitalist looks towards Eli and Eli approaches him.]

CAPITALIST---What did you remark?

ELI---I say, are you coming South? If so, I want to speak a few plain words that I think will interest a man like you. You are a man of business, ain't you?

CAPITALIST---Yes, sir, I profess to be.

ELI—Well, that's just what I am, too. Birds of a feather will flock together; and not only that, they delight in and seek the same atmosphere, the same climate, and the same surroundings generally—hence I propound to you the momentous question, the answering of which it is dangerous to delay, to-wit : “*ARE YOU COMING SOUTH?*”

CAPITALIST—Well, my dear sir, I have not exactly decided yet. I am looking about for a new home and place for profitable investment. The extreme cold weather of the North-West freezes up my—

ELI—Exactly so—just as I knew! Freezes up your factory and your whole physical system generally and that of your family. Now, let me tell you, this is the place for you to come to. Come South! Come to Meridian! I tell you, my friend, this is the God-favored section of the earth and Meridian is the hub. We've got five different railroads going out in six different points of the compass and two more that will be built in the near future. One of them reaches across to the rich Mississippi bottoms and connects us with the Father of Waters. Another splits open in its course the finest prairie cotton lands in the world and drains the heavily laden cotton fields of West Alabama right into Meridian. Another penetrates the heart of the world-renowned pine forests of that region of Mississippi that dips towards the sea--forests, the envy of the whole wide world. Another of our railroads taps the inexhaustible coal and iron lands of Alabama and puts fuel for factories right at our doors (and as far as iron land is concerned, there's plenty of that down here at Enterprise,) not only that, but it connects us with the markets of the East. Another takes us also through pine woods on to Mobile on the bay, and passing north carries us on by Marion Station to the Ohio River and gives us everything beyond. Yes, we are the coming city of the South. Draw a straight line from New York to New Orleans—the two opposing poles of the great commercial magnet of America—and it will pass right through Meridian, missing it but a hair's-breadth. Our lands are fine for truck farming, cotton, corn, grasses, all sorts of grain and so forth; and so forth-- and we've got the very largest assortment of flowers, sunshine, balmy breezes, health, happiness and prosperity; and this is the place you are looking for! Now, what do you say?

CAPITALIST—From what I've seen I am very favorably impressed with your beautiful and thriving city ; but —

ELI—Exactly so!

CAPITALIST—I desire, however, to extend my inspections further, after which I shall decide probably upon some point of locating. I am thinking very seriously of moving my establishment to some other than its present location. I would be delighted to have a longer interview with you on this subject and hope for one some time soon. At this moment I have some private matters demanding my attention, and must beg you to excuse me. I bid you good evening. [Bows courteously to leave.]

ELI—Well, now, my friend, I'd like to know before you go : “*ARE YOU COMING SOUTH?*”

CAPITALIST—From present prospects I think I'll have to !

ELI—Well, let me present you with some of our literature. After perusing this, you will surely want to become one of us. [Eli presents Capitalist with a copy of “*Are You Coming South?*”]

CAPITALIST—Thank you! Good-day, sir.

ELI—[Addressing Capitalist.] Good-bye, Colonel. Hope to see you again soon. [Exit Capitalist.]

GENERAL HUSTLER—[Approaching Eli, elated---accompanied by Welfare Committee---slapping Eli on the back.]

“We are getting there, Eli, with both feet---and don't you forget it!”

ELI—You bet! We must go now and pass some resolutions about that fellow, and have it stated in the morning's paper that a large, new cotton factory is on the eve of being established in Meridian by a number of rich and wealthy capitalists from the East, who are tired and disgusted with that frozen section, and who are perfectly in love with our Southern country, and who make miraculous predictions of her wonderful future. Come, let's be at it!

GENERAL HUSTLER—But here---what was that fellow's name?

ELI—Be blamed if I didn't forget to ask him his name. But that makes no difference. His name is nothing. His money is what we want! [Exit All.]

[Enter M. & O. R. R. Train.]

M. & O. CONDUCTOR—Meridian! Change cars for Selma, Montgomery, Chattanooga, Cincinnati, Vicksburg, New Orleans, Shreveport and Texas Pacific points.

[Enter V. & M. R. R. Train.]

V. & M. CONDUCTOR—Meridian! Change cars for Mobile, New Orleans, Selma, Montgomery, Chattanooga, Atlanta, and Carolina and Georgia points!

[Enter E. T. V. & G. Train.]

E. T. V. & G. CONDUCTOR—Meridian! Change cars for Mobile, New Orleans, Vicksburg, Shreveport, and Texas points!

[Enter A. G. S. Train.]

A. G. S. CONDUCTOR—Meridian! Change cars for Mobile, Vicksburg, Jackson, Shreveport and Texas points!

[Enter N. O. & N. E. Train.]

N. O. & N. E. CONDUCTOR—Meridian! Change cars for Selma, Montgomery, Mobile, St. Louis, Cairo, and Vicksburg!

[Hotel Porters call out their Hotels.]

[Enter Meridian.]

MERIDIAN—Watchman tell us of the night,
What its signs of promise are!

WATCHMAN—Dawn's rosy fingers appear in sight;
Dark fades away—the sky grows clear.

MERIDIAN—Thanks, thanks! my watchman on the heights!

Who scans with never failing eye
The heavens beyond, and reads aright
My future on the distant sky—
Tell me, I pray you, tell again,
That I Prosperity may hope,
That I life's rugged race may run
With swifter foot and fitly cope
With other cities of my time.

WATCHMAN—I do! fair city of the East!
Spread out your banner to the day,
And have it kissed on every fold
By the rising sun's each healthful ray!
Put forth the will! Stretch forth the hand!
And bid the Spirit of Progress come—
(On your beck'ning hand she only waits)
Her heart is fixed on this fair land,
Her face turned towards your opening gates!
Call on her—she will hear your voice,
Her wand has magic in its touch;
Your destiny is all your choice.
Choose that cup which holdeth much.
The efforts made must be your own—
Good fruit is reaped from good seed sown.

MERIDIAN—[Soliloquizing]

Then let me bid that Spirit come—
She heeds not those whose voice is dumb—
Let Hope, let Industry, and Thrift
Point out to her the black cloud's rift,
And let the maid, in her first view,
Behold the sunshine streaming through!

O, Spirit of Progress from out the air !
 Thou goddess—queen, divinely fair !
 Thou Venus risen from the sea,
 Come, thou, O Spirit, come to me !
 Touch Commerce with thy magic rod,
 Make all to know thy beck and nod,
 Put wheels in motion—lead the way,
 Turn drowsy night to bustling day ;
 Bring with you, Spirit, when you come,
 The music of the Fact'ry's hum,
 And with thy vesture's graceful sweep
 Awake my people from their sleep.

[Enter *Spirit of Progress.*]

She comes—fair Spirit of the air !
 Welcome, thrice welcome—welcome here !
 I kneel thy shining face to greet !

[Enter *Eli.*]

ELI—For we are getting there now with both our feet !

SPIRIT OF PROGRESS—[Addressing *Meridian.*]

I heard thy voice upon the winds.
 From out Industry's deaf'ning dins
 I've come.. New vigor take. I wave
 This star-tipped wand around thy brow;
 It's circle will with magic glow;
 Thine energy 'twill thrill and save.
 Again the magic circle run !
 Thy life-thread Fate this moment spun.

MERIDIAN—This from my heart shall ne'er escape—

ELI—For we are sure to get there in good shape!

SPIRIT OF PROGRESS—[to *Meridian.*]—
 Give me thy hand and follow me,
 This day Industry shall honor thee !
 Be thou seated on this throne—

ELI—And Eli will see the thing well done.

[The Spirit of Progress and Eli escort Meridian to the throne, where she receives the different Industries (in the persons of young ladies appropriately costumed) who come to do her honor. Each Industry, on entering and being introduced, presents Meridian with some article expressive of the Industry represented. The Spirit of Progress waves her Wand.]

[Enter *Hardware.*]

SPIRIT OF PROGRESS—[Introducing her to *Meridian.*]

The first responsive to my cirling wand
 Comes Hardware, moving on with queenly grace,
 The farmer's, builder's, and the housewife's friend—
 She holds, in honoring thee a foremost place.

HARDWARE--[Presenting *Meridian* with Lock and Key]
 My love for thee, I pledge shall e'er endure.
 Take these, the emblems of a love secure.—[Exit.]

ELI—Hardware! So cold, so chill, so awful practical!
 Who could expect one rhythmic movement there?
 Begone, ye doubts ! For motion's poetry
 Hath here appeared in person for Hardware.

[Enter *Jewelry and Silver Ware.*]

SPIRIT OF PROGRESS—[Introducing her.]
 Chains, charms, and bracelets, watches and clocks;
 Spoons, forks, and ladles in a nice little box.

ELI—[Aside.]
 Yes, send your wives down to look at the clocks.
 Then you, like the spoons, will be in a box.

JEWELRY AND SILVER WARE—[Addressing *Meridian.*]
 Time changes, saith the poet in his rhyme;
 But thro' all changes, this Clock keeps with Time.

[Enter *Queen and Crescent Railroad.*]

SPIRIT OF PROGRESS—[Introducing her.]

Singing thro' the forests,
 Rattling over ridges,
 Shooting thro' the cotton,
 Rumbling over bridges,
 Whizzing thro' the mountains—
 Startling 'tis to me !
 Bless me, what a Railroad
 Is "the Q and C."

QUEEN AND CRESCENT—[Addressing *Meridian.*]

I bring to you and tender
 (To me a pleasing task)
 The tribute of a Crescent
 And Freight Rates as you ask.—(Exit.)

ELI—Yes—a lovely Railroad !
 Charming in her dealings,
 Twisting up male heartstrings,
 Fluttering up their feelings.
 Clear the track—ye victims !
 Amazing 'tis to me !
 Yes—a lovely Railroad
 Is this Q and C.

[Enter *Post Office.*]

SPIRIT OF PROGRESS—[Introducing her.]

The Post Office! With letters and papers for all,
 For lovers, for business men, the great and the small;
 Many's the number of those who have sought her—
 The Post Office, Uncle Sam's favorite daughter!

POST OFFICE--[Presenting *Meridian* with a Sealed Letter]
 Enclosed please find an offering from me—
 My pledge to be all that an Office should be.
 [Exit]

ELI—Oh, who is it that would not bend the knee,
 Or do anything to please the Powers that be.
 To win this, the favorite child of the Nation?
 Yes, hurrah for the present Administration!
 Hurrah for Ben Harrison and his whole delegation!
 Hurrah for Eli's application!

(Enter *Cotton Compress.*)

SPIRIT OF PROGRESS—[Introducing her.]

The Cotton Compress—a grand and good thing—
 Of all your industries is traffic's strong wing;

ELI—But Beauty that matches a Venus thrice o'er,
 Into one is here compressed and moves to your door

COMPRESS—[Presenting *Meridian* with a diminutive
 Cotton Bale.]

The South's fleecy staple—the tribute I bring.
 God bless our Southland! Her Cotton is King.
 [Exit.]

[Enter *Ice Factory.*]

ELI—Let me give you a riddle :

The sultrier the summer, the more it's a wheezing;
 The hotter the weather, the more it's a freezing.

What's that? Ice Factory !

ICE FACTORY—[Addressing *Meridian.*]

My offering is cool and nice;
 'Tis all I have—a piece of ice. (Exit)

SPIRIT OF PROGRESS

In looks, she's cold as Artic regions,
 At heart as warm as summer's sun;
 The Factory ice is all unnatural—
 By artifice the freezing's done.

[Enter *Fire Department.*]

SPIRIT OF PROGRESS—[Introducing her.]

Meridian Fire Department !

Lucky boys---the fire laddies,
 To have such one their honors wear—
 She as gentle as they are daring,
 They as brave as she is fair.
 Fire! Fire! Fire! Fire!
 Are cries that thrill them and inspire.

FIRE DEPARTMENT--[Presenting *Meridian* with Fireman's Silver Speaking Trumpet.]

In their behalf, thyself I come to greet,
 And lay this down, their tribute, at thy feet. (Exit.)

ELI--Yes, she's as sweet as they are homely,

They as tough as she is fair,
 Lucky boys---these fire laddies---
 To have such Grace their deeds declare;
 But blooming Beauty can to duty
 Call them, and their hearts inspire,
 As well as yelling like Camanches—
 Fire! Fire! Fire!

[Enter Queen of Flowers, accompanied by Six Fairies.]

SPIRIT OF PROGRESS---[Introducing them.]

Flowers, like stars, lift up the heart of man.

FLOWER QUEEN---[Addressing Meridian.]

My jewels here I bring from fairy bower,
Their souls are sunshine--their companions, flowers;
Accept them and the tributes that they bring---
Flowers fresh opened by the kiss of Spring.

ELI---The flowers that bloom in the spring, tra la,
Bring beauty and promise and a sweet perfume;
As we merrily skip and we sing, tra la,
We welcome the hope that they bring, tra la,
Of the fact we have started a boom.
For a boom in these times is always a thing
As welcome as flowers that bloom in the spring.

[Enter Goddess of Health (Drugs)]

SPIRIT OF PROGRESS---[Introducing her.]
Health for the ailing---relief for the sick;
Rose cheeks for the failing---strength for the weak.

GODDESS OF HEALTH---[Addressing Meridian.]

Though health and vigor flush your cheek,
No telling when you may grow sick;
Of Drugs I leave you your allotl,
Be sure, now---always shake the bottle! (*Exit.*)

ELI---Bottles of physic and boxes of pills,
Chewing-gum, prescriptions, and big doctors' bills!

[Enter National Bank.]

SPIRIT OF PROGRESS---[Introducing her.]

Checks and bank-notes and bonds,
Greenbacks, silver and gold;
Your National Banks no one outranks,
The world's paper bought here and sold.

NATIONAL BANK---[Addressing Meridian.]

That I my heart to thine may join,
I give to thee a bag of coin. [*Exit.*]

ELI---Money—money—money—money !

That's the thing we need;
With plenty of money to help us on,
We're sure then to succeed.
O money—money—money—money!
To see a woman with lots of money,
Makes me feel so awful funny,
For that is what I need!

[Enter Goddess of Grain, Provisions, Feed Stuffs, &c.]

SPIRIT OF PROGRESS---[Introducing her.]

Here's flour and here's corn meal,
Here's oats and here's hay—
The things that are needed
By man every day.

GODDESS OF GRAIN, &c.—[Addressing Meridian.]

Life's staples I bring thee—
For man and for beast:
By many they're wanted—
Few only can feast.—[*Exit.*]

ELI---Yes, there's corn meal and there's flour,
There's oats and there's hay,
And all sorts of cow feed
That you need every day,
To-wit: Wheat bran and Timothy, Lespidisa and chops—
A bill running on
Forever and aye—
Without end, like the world—like the brook, never
stops.

[Enter Candy Factory.]

SPIRIT OF PROGRESS---[Introducing her.]

A place there is within your bounds
Where sweetness lavishly abides,
Where Candy, pure and bright, is made,
O'er which this gentle maid presides.

CANDY FACTORY---[Addressing Meridian.]

A bunch of nick-nacks—candy and cake!
Wilt thou from me this box of sweetness take?
[*Exit.*]

ELI—A box of candy and a girl
Go mighty well together;
The latter loves the former more
Sometimes than a brother:
This streak-ed sweetness long drawn out
Is good for boys to have about.

[Enter Cigar Factory.]

SPIRIT OF PROGRESS---[Introducing her.]
The twister of the Cuban weed—
A friend to every smoker;
Her wares, a solace to the sad—
A great help to the joker.

CIGAR FACTORY---[Addressing Meridian.]
Receive this, please—from me a souvenir—
My Factory's best Havana leaf Cigar. [*Exit.*]

ELI—Yes, Hodges' best! Enough already said!
It's known by all—the best Cigar that's made.

[Enter Crockery.]

SPIRIT OF PROGRESS---[Introducing her.]
Crockery—Crockery—Crockery line,
Cups, saucers, and goblets, and everything fine.

CROCKERY---[Addressing Meridian.]
Accept, I pray you, of these wares of mine,
And smile with favor on the Crockery line. [*Exit.*]

ELI—Crockery—Crockery—Crockery line!
If you're all broke up just go to Joe Cline,
But if while you're there he keeps very mum,
Don't feel offended—for poor Joe is dumb!
You will also find favor in Fortune's bright wheel,
If, in looking for Crock'ry, you'll go to Casteel.

[Enter Photographic Studio.]

SPIRIT OF PROGRESS---[Introducing her.]
From Art's rich Temple this fair lady comes,
And bowing, craves thy smile in Art's behalf.

PHOTOGRAPHIC STUDIO---[Addressing Meridian.]
My Portrait this—by God's own sunlight drawn,
Wilt thou accept it?—this, my Photograph. [*Exit.*]

ELI—Photography! The art work of the sun!
Just seat yourself before the artist's gun—
E'er you can wink,
Or even think,
The photographing's done.

[Enter Music.]

SPIRIT OF PROGRESS---[Introducing her.]
There's music in the laughing of the rills
And in the songs the forest warblers sing,
The butterfly that dances o'er the hills
Hath music in the motions of his wing;—
But all the notes that human throat e'er tried,
In this one form are here personified!

MUSIC---[Addressing Meridian.]
Accept this Harp! It's strung with straws of Pine.
A subject let me always be of thine. [*Exit.*]

ELI—Rings on her fingers and bells on her beaux,
She will have music wherever she goes!

[Enter Insurance Business.]

SPIRIT OF PROGRESS---[Introducing her.]
Here comes the one that makes men feel secure;
For prudent men their goods always Insure.

INSURANCE BUSINESS---[Presenting Meridian with a
Policy of Insurance.]
I here Insure you 'gainst all adverse gales—
May Fortune's winds forever fill your sails. [*Exit.*]

ELI—If your house is on fire and she's about,
You needn't try to put it out—
She'll fix you at an early day;
It oft improves one's premises
To have these old things burned away.

[Enter Furniture Factory.]

SPIRIT OF PROGRESS---[Introducing her.]
House Furniture Maker for rich and for poor!
Anything needed she'll place at your door.

FURNITURE FACTORY---[Presenting Meridian with an
Article of Household Furniture.]
A specimen product, substantial and good—
Accept it! 'tis made of your own native wood.

[*Exit.*]

ELI—Our woods are so varied and of excellent grade,
I wonder of which this sample is made.

[Enter Public School.]

SPIRIT OF PROGRESS—[Introducing her.]

The Public Schools! Our people's pet and pride!
For Freedom needs the School House by her side.

PUBLIC SCHOOL—[Presenting Meridian with a Globe or
other Article of School Furniture.]

Twelve hundred children, in whose name I come,
Send this and wish God's blessings on thy head;
In love with Knowledge, may thy people all
Forever in the paths of virtue tread. [Exit]

ELI—"A little learning is a dangerous thing,
Drink deep or touch not the Pierian spring."
Regarding this a wise and prudent rule,
Meridian youngsters, eager, go to school,
And taste the spring, not merely with a sup,
But bending o'er it, drink the whole spring up.
This which I tell you, is the very truth--
There's nothing small about Meridian youth.

(Enter Sash and Blind Factory.)

SPIRIT OF PROGRESS—(Introducing her.)

The song of the Planer is here to be heard,
And chopping of Chisels on Sash, Doors, and
Blinds;

Here Industry revels, and needs not a word
To assure you this Fact'ry does work of all kinds

SASH AND BLIND FACTORY—(Addressing Meridian.)

A modest sample, this, of Labor's skill,
I pledge thee Labor loyal to thy will. [Exit.]

ELI—The Sash and Blind! Yes, such an awful hum—
It splits your ears and drowns out all you say!
Machinery—belting—hammers have their way.
It's racket tells of Progress surely come.

(Enter Machine Shops and Foundries.)

SPIRIT OF PROGRESS—(Introducing her.)

Vulcan—who shapes the iron to his will—
Sends his fair daughter here to honor thee.

MACHINE SHOPS AND FOUNDRIES—(Presenting Meridian
with a diminutive Locomotive Engine.)
From glowing forges and revolving wheels,
This offering wilt thou here accept from me? [Exit.]

ELI—A worthy tribute this fair one presents,
God bless the sweat-drops that it represents.

(Enter Carriage Factory.)

SPIRIT OF PROGRESS—(Introducing her.)

Buggies and Carriages—Wagons and Carts,
Made here and mended in all of their parts.

CARRIAGE FACTORY—(Addressing Meridian.)

My Factory hath sent you this tribute—a Wheel,
Of your own timbers made and is true as of steel.
[Exit.]

ELI—No wonder her wheels are so true and so good,
When our limitless forests are fat with such wood.

(Enter Fertilizer Factory.)

SPIRIT OF PROGRESS—(Introducing her.)

God bless our worn out hills and vales
That once produced such cotton bales;
The Powder which these bags contain
Can give them back their life again.

FERTILIZER FACTORY—(Presenting Meridian with Bags
of Sweetly Perfumed Powder.)

Accept these, pray—because, forsooth,
They'll give your fields Perennial Youth. [Exit.]

ELI—No need to scatter on the ground
That stuff. Just let her walk around
And on the fields one look bestow,
Her smiles will make the cotton grow.

[Enter Meridian Daily News and The Daily Democrat.]

SPIRIT OF PROGRESS—(Introducing them.)

Locals and the Press Dispatches,
Markets, Personals, and Puffs,
Editorials on the Tariff.

Society Notes, Arrests of Roughs.
Two papers these, all men peruse—
The Democrat and the Daily News,
Which is more praised, it's fit for tat
"Twixt the Daily News and the Democrat.

NEWSPAPERS—(Presenting Meridian with an Associated
Press Dispatch.)

The last Dispatch that's taken from the wires!
Just listen! Hear! Such news as never tires!
It comes from up in a Northwestern State,
Blizzard Hollow is the place of date:

(Reads the Dispatch Aloud.)

"A caravan of aggregated wealth,
Investment seeking and desiring health,
Is leaving here from all this country round—
Meridian is the point for which it's bound." [Exit]

ELI—Just listen, won't you, at the joyful news!
Ten thousand people moving—got "the blues!"
All coming here—so our papers say.
Southward the Star of Empire makes its way!

SPIRIT OF PROGRESS—(Addressing Meridian.)

In solid phalanx under your review
My subjects now shall pass and honor you;
And when you see how gracefully they move,
You'll count it fortune that you've gained their love.

(Addressing the Industries in the Distance.)

COME HARDWARE—Silver—Money—Labor—all!
Thou daughters, fair, of Progress, hear my call!
Come on! Come on! Meridian's favor win.
Come, let the March of Industry begin!

(Enter the Industries in Double Columns.)

GRAND MARCH OF THE INDUSTRIES AND OF PROGRESS.

[The March ended by the Column of Industries forming in semi-circular line about Meridian on her throne.]

SPIRIT OF PROGRESS—

Meridian, thou city of the lofty pine!
These nymphs of commerce at thy beauteous shrine
Bow their proud heads, and with one heart agree.
They honor themselves when thus they honor thee.
Thy supple feet, by fairies brushed with flowers,
Shall fleetier grow with time, and all thy powers
The world shall see, and seeing know thy worth,
And Commerce bless the era of thy birth.
Thy past is hallow'd by many a sacred scene;
Most of thine acts, thank heaven, toward virtue lean.
Graves of thine honored dead crown neighbor'ring hills—
Their mem'ry yet the living present thrills.
As thou didst pray me, I have come to thee,
And found, on coming, thou art fair to see.
Thy hills I've touched with this, my magic rod,
And homes sprung forth where lately Nature trod.
Thy fact'ries' music mingleth with the sound
Of that sweet music from thy rills around.
My subjects—Thrift and Industry and Brawn—
Have hither been by thine own virtues drawn,
The tide which looks and, timid, often waits,
Is moying ever towards thy tow'ring gates.
And here to-night—while eyes of Friendship feast—
I crown thee, fair one—Queen City of the East!

(The Grand March Continues. The Spirit of Progress and Eli, bringing up the rear of the two Columns, take position at front of Stage, the two moving columns forming behind them in semi-circular lines.)

SPIRIT OF PROGRESS—

Indulgent friends—Good night! Good night!
May coming days be rosy bright
To you, to yours, to all you love,
And blessings reach you from above,
Our task has been to build your town.
At this point now we lay it down;
The work begun you must pursue,
Its finishing we leave with you,
May you with heart the charge assume,

ELI—And never be without a boom!

SPIRIT OF PROGRESS—Good night!

ELI—Good night!

ALL—Good night! Good night!



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